

Who's Afraid Of The Big Bad Wolf?

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Summary: Things are finally looking up for Fabletown after the death of the Crooked Man. Sheriff Bigby Wolf has gotten together with Snow White, the love of his life and some semblance of peace has been restored to the community. It is suddenly broken though, when a vicious murder occurs. There's another wolf in town. And Bigby is going to have to unleash the beast to get rid of it.

1. Chapter 1 - True Love's Kiss

****Chapter 1 â€" True Love's Kiss****

Once upon a time there was a land where everything that was built upon it reached up and touched the sky. The structures themselves were made from wondrous materials that existed in no other world, being as clear as glass and yet remaining as sturdy as stone. However this was a land that was ripped apart by wrongdoing: brother turning on brother, groups of wild creatures roaming what had the potential to be the happiest kingdom of all, and killing without remorse. The inhabitants of this world, who once lived in harmony with the nature that gave it life, gradually began exploiting it and caused it to become gravely ill. It was into this world that the Fables escaped from their war-riddled Homelands.

Into ****New York City.****

Deputy Mayor Snow White emerged from the Business Office door, pinching the bridge of her nose and clutching a bundle of papers to her chest. The bustling state the Office was in at that moment, Fables being shunted in and out and _actually being helped, _was an environment Snow thought she would thrive in. Instead it was giving her one hell of a headache. The line snaking down the hallway looked at her with a collectively puzzled gaze as she walked past it towards the elevator.

"My associate is available for your enquiries for the moment, if

you'll excuse me. I have a few errands to run around town, but I will be back in a half hour or so. Thank you for your time," she smiled tiredly as she addressed the crowd, who nodded and mumbled their thanks. She heard Bluebeard's booming voice echo along the hallway and scoffed.

Her _associate, _right. A gentle 'ding' rang out as the elevator reached the floor and Snow stepped into it, straightening her skirt as she waited for the doors to close again. When the thick metal sheets slid shut, finally separating her from anything â€" _everything â€" _else, she collapsed onto the wall behind her and shut her eyes tightly.

It was only the morning after the Crooked Man had been thrown down the Witching Well and already the pressure was getting to her. Snow's nerves were shot and she felt like sinking down to the elevator floor and staying there, but she reminded herself that every Fable in New York City was counting on her. And she would _never _let them down again. She had been part of the failed administrative system that had been slowly destroying Fabletown for over a century and, with the guilt she felt crawling under her skin, she was determined to make it right. Even if she had a nervous breakdown in the process.

She dragged a hand down her weary face and straightened up as the elevator reached the bottom floor. Grumble, the security guard, had his feet propped up on his desk and his navy cap covered his eyes. Snow rolled her eyes and a knowing smile tickled the corners of her red lips as a loud snort came from the sleeping "man". His true form was in fact masked with a particular spell called a 'glamour' that all non-human looking fables were required to have as long as they wanted to live in New York City. The rule made sense as, in Grumble's case for example, no human could ignore a seven-foot troll that just happened to be strolling through Times Square.

This absurd scene passed through Snow White's mind as she exited the Woodlands building and she laughed out loud as she opened the wrought iron gate, leading out onto the street.

On the other side of the steady flow of cars driving past, under a florist's striped awning stood a figure who turned its head at the sound of her tinkling laughter. As she shut the gate behind her, Snow's gaze fell onto the person in the shadows and her breath caught in her throat. He waited for a break in the traffic before jogging across the road to where she stood and simply looked at her, his expression unreadable as usual. Snow felt her heart rate speed up and mentally cursed her own body for betraying her, as she was sure he could hear her pulse.

She cleared her throat, "Is â€" is everything alright, Sheriff Wolf?" she stammered out, trying to peel her eyes away from his handsome, rugged face. He sighed and scratched at the stubble that was already growing back despite the fact that he'd shaved only two hours ago. Feeling the need to fill the silence, Snow continued, "Oh y-yes. You wanted to talk to me about something earlier, right?" The enigma before her nodded wordlessly and stared at the pavement, where rain drops were beginning to create patterns on the stone. Snow had known him for centuries, and yet she could never figure out what he was thinking. _Ever. _He was such a mystery to her and, she had to admit, that was one of the reasons she found herself so _attracted _to him. Unfortunately, it wouldn't be right to act on her feelings with her

being the acting mayor and Sheriff Wolf being the " well, the sheriff. It just wasn't professional.

And yet, try as she might, Snow just couldn't get rid of her feelings. They had built up over years and had grown so slowly that she hadn't even realised they were there. But suddenly, they just _were. _

"Snow?" a deep, quiet voice interrupted her thoughts. She blinked rapidly and looked up into the concerned eyes of the sheriff. That was a mistake, she found herself becoming lost in their depths. The sheriff's hazel eyes were filled with an amalgamation of emotions that she just couldn't decipher. He'd seen so much, experienced so many things, _felt _so many feelings. Snow gasped softly when she noticed that the hazel had gradually began to melt into a tawny yellow. His eyes now looked like molten gold and she marvelled at their beauty. But they contained something else in them, a look that was almost _predatory_, and that awakened deep, primal feelings in her that she didn't want to acknowledge. Snow noticed that her breath had become heavy, and that she had started to pant. From fear or desire, she couldn't tell. She averted her eyes quickly and straightened the papers that she still clutched to her chest.

The glimmer of a smile

flashed across the man's chiselled features,

"You seemed to like them so much, I thought I'd put on a bit of a show." Snow chuckled with embarrassment and tucked a loose ebony curl behind her ear.

"Wh-what did you want to talk to me about, Bigby?" a real smile spread across the sheriff's features when she used his first name, lighting up his face and making him even _more _attractive. Snow hadn't thought that was possible and she felt her knees weaken slightly. Before he could reply, Snow's shaky legs gave way and she found the ground rising to meet her. It never came though, due to strong arms wrapping around her torso protectively. She gazed up into Bigby's face while he averted his gaze and brought her to her feet. She felt her body trembling and, with the sheriff still holding her close, she wondered whether he could feel it too. Although she was standing upright now, he didn't let her go and she didn't make a move to step away.

"What happened to make you fall over like that?" he mumbled, their faces close enough that she could hear him without trouble. She said nothing, but drew her face closer to his and lifted her hands to his strong neck, resting them lightly on either side of it. The papers she had been holding were long gone, scattered around the two figures on the street like flowers petals in a meadow but, for once Snow didn't care. Bigby's breathing quickened slightly, and Snow hesitated for a brief moment.

Stuff it, she thought and gently pressed her lips to his. The sheriff stiffened, but soon relaxed into the kiss and returned it tenderly. Snow felt his big hands move from her waist to her face and she welcomed his gentle touch. His thumbs stroked her jawline lovingly as they pulled apart and stared at each other. Snow's eyes widened and she pulled away first, hurriedly gathering up the papers from the sidewalk.

"I'm so sorry. I don't know what came over me. I â€" a hand on her shoulder made the excuses that had been tumbling from her lips fizzle out and she looked at its owner with flushed cheeks. Bigby was smiling at her warmly and began rubbing small, comforting circles into her back.

"You don't know how long I've waited for that, Snow." Snow's jaw dropped at the confession but she said nothing, the possibility that the man she had been quietly obsessing over actually returned her feelings was far too good to be true. Bigby continued softly, "Ever since I first met you Snow, back in the Homelands. I _knew _that you were â€" I don't know, the One I guess?" he rubbed the back of his neck uncomfortably. Snow continued to gape at him. "Now this is going to sound ridiculous but, from that moment on I realised that I, well I _loved _you." He cringed at the statement, hoping that this sudden outpouring of emotions wasn't going to chase her away. Snow stayed silent and Bigby looked away, convinced now that he'd made a terrible mistake. "I â€" never mind, just forget I said anything." He took his hand off of Snow's back and made a move to get up, but slender fingers caught his wrist. He looked down in amazement to find Snow smiling up at him, an emotion he couldn't recognise in her icy blue eyes. "Bigby," she began slowly as she got to her feet, "I don't think you ever realised it, I mean I am _really _good at keeping my feelings to myself, but over these last few years I have been attracted to you in the strangest way. It even felt like my _soul _wanted to be with you. But I didn't think you'd want me back," Bigby raised his thick eyebrows and his mouth fell open slightly. Snow White sighed deeply, "I guess what I'm trying to say Bigby is that," she paused for a moment and her smile widened, "I think I love you too, and that I have loved you for a very long time. We were both just too blind to realise it." Snow laughed hesitantly, the musical sound bringing a genuine smile to Bigby's lips and he wrapped his arms around her waist again and swung her into the air with joy.

"Down boy!" she laughed giddily and when he put her down again, Snow planted a kiss on the sheriff's cheek. Colour rose to his face and she giggled. "I've never seen you _blush _before, Bigby." Snow gasped jokingly and the sheriff looked down at his feet, scuffing a shoe into the pavement. The former princess felt her heart expand with a love she had never known before and she reached a hand out and tweaked his nose. He wrinkled it and gave her a mock glare. Snow simply giggled again like a naughty school girl as her gaze fell onto her watch. She gasped in horror when she saw the time. "WHAT?! We've been out here for FORTY MINUTES?!" She looked up at her companion pointedly, but Bigby only shrugged.

_How long were we kissing for? _She thought in astonishment. Bigby snickered as if he knew what she was thinking and Snow glared at him before rolling her eyes. He could probably _smell _the pheromones rolling off of her. She bent down to gather her papers, the sheriff helping her of course, and when she straightened up she began walking over to the gate leading to the Office. When she didn't hear footsteps behind her, she turned around with a puzzled look. "You coming, Sheriff?" he scratched his stubble absentmindedly before shrugging. "Why not?" he replied and walked over to the gate, holding it open so that Snow could enter first.

"For someone who was literally raised by wolves, you are quite the

gentleman," Snow raised an eyebrow playfully as they made their way up the front steps. "What can I say? My mother was big on manners," he winked back at her as they walked past Grumble, who was still snoring contentedly at his desk. Bigby pushed the elevator button and a comfortable silence fell between the two. There was no need to say anything, both were quite content simply with each other's company.

But as the doors whooshed open and they stepped into the compact box, a single thought dominated Snow's mind.

_I'm in love with the Big Bad Wolf. _

2. Chapter 2 - Feels Like Home

****Chapter 2 "Feels Like Home" ****

Bigby laughed out loud as he sank back into the only chair in his apartment, folding his hands behind his head. Outside his window, the cars tooted their nightly chorus and the street lights guided their way. High above, the night sky twinkled with stars that competed with the illuminated city whose bright and busy nature imitated what Bigby was feeling right now. He couldn't believe it, Snow loved him back! He had thought that he would have been stuck with an unrequited love for the rest of his already ridiculously long life. But Snow _loved him BACK!_ He settled back into his chair and closed his eyes, blissfully happy for the first time in a _long _time. After a while, Bigby's eyes snapped open and an idea popped into his head. _This definitely calls for a celebration_, he thought giddily. He sprung from the armchair and hurried out the door, slamming it behind him as his pack of cigarettes lay forgotten on the kitchen table.

Bigby entered Central Park by unnecessarily climbing over a tall, iron fence and his already high spirits skyrocketed as the familiar smells fought for his attention and enveloped him in their natural richness. The lush, earthy smell of the nourished ground beneath his feet mingled with the fresh pine odour of the forest before him. He could smell the lake beyond the trees and the pure, untainted scent it gave off was enough to make Bigby dizzy with happiness.

He felt like he was home again.

Unable to contain himself any longer the sheriff of Fabletown dashed into the shadow of the trees and clumsily undressed, tucking his clothes into the hollow of a large tree just out of sight of the cars driving by. Bigby paused for a moment to slow his heart rate and regain his concentration. When his head was clear again, the sheriff got onto his hands and knees and waited.

After a short while, Bigby's usually chestnut brown hair turned to a dark mahogany colour and extended down his back. On his chest the same thick, silky hair grew and spread all over his body. He shut his eyes as he felt his bones shift and elongate, his muscles rearrange themselves and his sinews twist and reform painlessly, into more comfortable positions. He felt the air rush underneath his body as he began to grow larger, taller. When Bigby opened his eyes again, they gleamed intensely, their now ochre colour reminiscent of the hue Snow had seen them earlier on in the day. He huffed with satisfaction as he studied his body, the transformation finally complete. The

eight-foot-tall wolf stood proud among the trees, and all the little critters that made their home in the forest scurried away into their dens. This was Bigby's true form, who he was deep down at his core.

And _man, _was it good to be back.

The great, fearsome wolf bounded through the forest, feeling truly _free _for the first time since he could remember. Reaching a clearing, he paused and threw his head back to let a long, primal howl rip from his throat. When he had finished, he let his tongue loll out of his mouth as he panted in exhilaration. The wolf padded around in a tight circle for a little, flattening the long thick grass around him to make a comfortable sleeping area. He decided that he'd sleep there for the night. He didn't feel like returning to his lumpy armchair and it felt unnatural sleeping in beds anyway. The wolf gave a sigh of contentment.

He didn't even know why he pretended to be human. He _wasn't _one and he felt permanently on edge when he decided to walk around on two legs. He felt vulnerable. _Weak. _And he didn't like it one bit. A thought of Snow White flickered through his mind and the wolf smiled and chuckled under his breath. Well, he supposed that there was _one _upside now. A frown quickly took the grin's place though as he remembered that Snow couldn't stand his wolf form. His _true _form. There were too many horror stories that she had heard about for it to be okay in her eyes. As long as Bigby was "human", she figured that meant he wasn't out eating anyone for dinner. The wolf scowled, he wasn't doing anything particularly _bad _now, was he? Despite the fact that he was currently a giant wolf. He rested his head on his front paws in contemplation. He would have to find a way to _show _Snow that he _was_ Bigby and Bigby _was _him, no matter what form he chose to take on. She had been mentally separating Bigby from the Big Bad Wolf for too long, forgetting that they were one and the same. The wolf's ears perked up with hopefulness at the idea, because one thing was for sure: He was never going to give up his true self. Ever.

The wolf growled and nodded his head resolutely at his decision before shutting his luminous amber eyes and falling into a deep, dreamless slumber.

Bigby awoke the next morning to the irritating, high-pitched shrill he recognised to be his cell phone. He gave a low growl of irritation, this annoying piece of Mundy technology was disrupting the innate sense of calm the forest provided. He sighed deeply though and rose to his feet.

Duty called.

The giant wolf ambled among the assembly of trees in the general direction of his belongings, the gradually rising sun warming the fur on his back and glinting off of his luxurious coat. It couldn't be anything urgent seeing as, now that the Crooked Man was gone, the community had returned to a state of tentative peacefulness. No one would dare to break that fragile harmony, not at the risk of the wrath of every resident of Fabletown who had had enough of the violence that had stricken their city.

Bigby reached the tree he'd left his clothes in and reluctantly

shrank back down into his human persona. The phone was still ringing and he winced as the sound penetrated his sensitive eardrums, whoever was on the other end was extremely persistent. He snatched the phone from the cavity and shoved it against his ear, holding it in place with a shoulder as he tugged his pants on.

"Sheriff Bigby" "

"What the hell have you done Bigby?!" An angry Snow screeched from the other end of the line. The sheriff almost dropped the phone and fumbled with it for a moment before managing to press it to his ear again. Snow was yelling obscenities at him from the other end and he decided that it would be better for his health to hold it at an arm's length instead. His brow creased with concern and confusion, he had never heard her so furious before, especially at him.

"I can't believe you would do this to us, to me," she sounded like she was on the verge of tears. Bigby waited for her to finish. Based on his experience, anything he said would only upset her more. It was a good decision.

"I thought you'd changed Bigby. I really did, but now we find a body with bite marks at his throat and an arm missing, presumably ingested. How are we going to do this if I can't even trust you anymore?" She was actually sobbing in between her words now and Bigby's heart broke at the sound. "Do you have anything to say for yourself?" she wailed.

The sheriff began cautiously, "Listen Snow. I promise you, I did not kill anyone." After a while he heard her sniffle on the other side, a little bit calmer at his words, but she didn't say anything. Bigby scratched at his stubble uncomfortably and fidgeted from foot to foot, a wolf attack? Of all the things someone could have done, and they had to make it look like a wolf attack. He heard Snow White clear her throat, waiting for him to continue. He hung his head, unsure of how to prove his innocence, and started to make another weak assurance. Suddenly, an idea popped into his head, "Look, I know there aren't any wolves in New York Snow, but do me a favour and look at the lacerations at his throat. Tell me how big you think the gap is separating the top and bottom teeth marks.

Snow took a deep breath and when she spoke, her voice was steady again, "I-I don't know" but it's not too big, I mean they just manage to enclose around his neck, not further."

Bigby sighed with relief, "There we go. You've seen me as a wolf, Snow. I would be able to hold somebody by the torso with my teeth."

She interrupted, "Yeah, as if I need a reminder of that." But she could see what he was getting at.

Bigby continued, "What I'm trying to say is that my jaw is much bigger than the one you're describing to me now." He continued to dress. Now that he was no longer the primary suspect, he would probably be needed at the crime scene. He waited for Snow to say something as he buttoned up his shirt and rolled up the sleeves to his elbows. He wasn't disappointed.

"Bigby?" she asked cautiously.

"Yeah, Snow?" he replied as he pulled his still knotted tie over his head.

"I'm â€" um â€" I'm glad you didn't kill anyone."

He chuckled good-naturedly, "I would never do that to you, Snow. Especially not now."

"Yeah, Bigby," she sighed wearily and he could hear the embarrassment in her voice, "I know. I'm sorry that it didn't seem like it but, I _do _know."

"I understand, Snow. I'll see you in a bit," he ended the call and shoved the phone into his pocket before pulling his coat on. Bigby _did _understand. He had too much history to pretend that people weren't still scared of him, or that at any second he would revert to his old ways. Like Colin had said only a couple of days ago: you can't change people's memories.

Bigby hurried out of the park and hailed a taxi cab. He climbed onto the uncomfortable leather seat and the driver asked for his destination.

Damn, I forgot to ask Snow where it was.

The sheriff rolled down his window and let the cold winter air fill the car. Sure enough, along with the icy breeze came the faint but distinct metallic smell of somewhat fresh blood. The odour spread out before Bigby like a road map with a route marked in a thick, red line.

"How about I just give you directions as we go?" he smirked.

End
file.